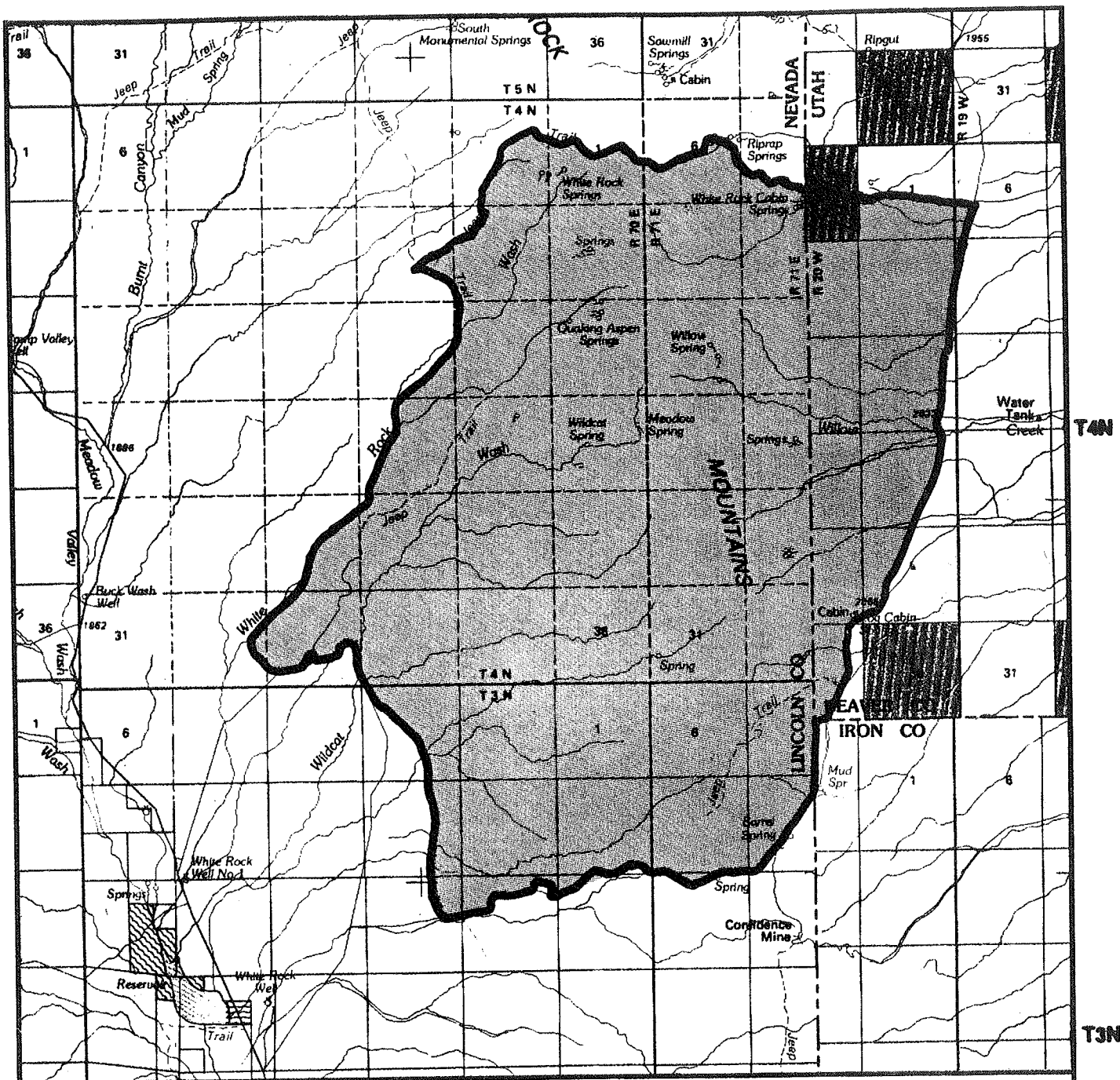


**White Rock Range
Wilderness Study Area**



RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS -



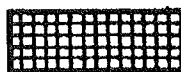
SPLIT ESTATE - NONE



RECOMMENDED FOR
NONWILDERNESS - NONE



STATE - NONE



LAND OUTSIDE WSA
RECOMMENDED FOR
WILDERNESS - NONE



PRIVATE - NONE



MILES

White Rock Range
Proposal

NV-040-202
March 1990

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA: 24,065 acres

The White Rock Range Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (NV-040-202) is mostly located in Lincoln County in the east-central portion of Nevada along the Nevada-Utah border. A portion of the WSA lies within the State of Utah on the western boundaries of Beaver and Iron Counties. The nearest communities are Ursine Nevada (population 100) about 15 miles to the southwest; and Pioche, Nevada (population 800) about 25 miles to the southwest. The entire WSA is comprised of public land with no private inholding (see Table 1). The boundaries of the White Rock Range WSA are formed on the southwest by a fenceline, on the west by the White Rock Wash jeep trail, on the north by two jeep trails, a legal bound

ary, and a parcel of Utah State land. The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by the Reeds Cabin Summit Road.

The WSA is made up of gentle mountain terrain with associated foothills and benchlands. The broad, north-south trending range is dissected by numerous side canyons and drainages. Elevations range from over 9,000 feet to about 6,100 feet. Most of the WSA is forested with juniper, pinyon, and fir woodland, varying with elevation. The north end, however, exhibits some interesting differences, including high open sagebrush country, ponderosa pines, white fir, aspen and two high (but intermittent) mountain lakes. Interspersed throughout the area are numerous small grassy meadows where springs support riparian vegetation.

TABLE 1
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA

TOTAL ACREAGE	
WITHIN THE WSA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	24,065
Split-Estate (BLM surface only)	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0
Total	24,065
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the WSA)	24,065
BLM (outside the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (within the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the WSA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	24,065
In-holdings (State, private)	0
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	0
Split-Estate	0
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0

Source: BLM File Data

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

**TABLE 1 (Continued)
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA**

UTAH	
WITHIN THE WSA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	3,820
Split-Estate (BLM surface only)	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0
Total	3,820
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the WSA)	3,820
BLM (outside the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (within the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the WSA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	3,820
In-holdings (State, private)	0
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	0
Split-Estate	0
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0

Source: BLM File Data

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

TABLE 1 (Continued)
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA

NEVADA	
WITHIN THE WSA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	20,245
Split-Estate (BLM surface only)	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0
Total	20,245
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the WSA)	20,245
BLM (outside the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (within the WSA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the WSA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	20,245
In-holdings (State, private)	0
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	0
Split-Estate	0
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	0
In-holdings (State, Private)	0

Source: BLM File Data

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), and was included in the Schell Management Framework Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Final Wilderness EIS was filed in September 1987. There were two alternatives analyzed in the EIS; an all wilderness alternative and a no wilderness alternative.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE:
 24,065 acres
 (recommended for wilderness)
 0 acres
 (recommended for nonwilderness)

The recommendation for the White Rock Range WSA is to designate the entire area as wilderness (Maps 1 and 2). This is considered to be the environmentally preferable alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term.

The White Rock Range was recommended for wilderness because of its high degree of

naturalness and solitude, the ease of management, and the lack of conflicts.

The White Rock Range WSA is part of a fairly gentle, well forested mountain range. Visitors have frequently explored this remote area and few signs of man can be found. The pristine nature of the WSA is apparent throughout. On the northern end, the ridge flattens into a high, broad windswept table interrupted only by pockets of aspen and fir. Large aspen trees, twisted and contorted by wind and weather provide for interesting photo opportunities. Volcanic boulders, colorful with splotches of lichens are strewn across the table. Wet meadows lie hidden in the mountains and two ephemeral lakes lie along the WSA's northern boundary. Signs of elk and deer are abundant.

Although hidden in many places by vegetation, the volcanic nature of the range is often apparent. Islands of strangely eroded volcanic ash and columnar peaks thrust out of and tower over the sea of

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

green trees. Here, visitors can climb out of the trees and get an expansive view of surrounding basins and ranges.

Solitude is the primary wilderness value here. Heavy tree cover, combined with jumbled mountain topography, results in outstanding opportunities for solitude. Visitors can vanish into an untouched land where man and his works are rarely seen.

The White Rock Range is capable of sustaining a relatively large number of visitors who may experience solitude without interference from each other. The area is notable for its large number of springs which enhance opportunities for backpacking, camping, and hiking. The relatively large amount of riparian acreage supported by these provides habitat for a large variety of animal species and this diversity of flora and fauna provides good opportunities for nature study.

The WSA's blocky configuration is ideal for management and requires no boundary modification. While easy to walk through, the close placement of the trees and the very rocky nature of the terrain almost totally excludes cross country vehicle travel.

Also leading to the wilderness recommendation is the fact that conflicts with other resource uses of this WSA are low. The USGS/BOM mineral survey showed the area to have low potential for metallic minerals, oil, gas, and geothermal resources. Only one mining claim is located along the southern boundary of the WSA. No development is anticipated in the future. There are no range projects within the WSA although proposals for spring developments and vegetative treatments are expected. Some spring developments would likely be allowed as well as some prescribed burns or wild fires. Grazing use of the WSA would continue. Although the White Rock Range has good potential for commercial woodland product harvest, ample areas exist outside of the WSA to meet foreseeable demand.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness: The pristine nature of the remote White Rock Range WSA is apparent throughout. Visitors have infrequently explored this little known area and few signs of man can be found.

The only unnatural features are five ways, none of which are more than a mile in length, and all but one of which are well screened by dense forest cover.

B. Solitude: The opportunities for solitude in this WSA are outstanding. There occur no sights and sounds of man within the WSA. The WSA's vegetative screening is exceptional, provided by an almost uninterrupted forest of pinyon and juniper, with a scattering of other conifers. This combined with good topographic screening provided by the mountains themselves, as well as a good unit configuration, allow for outstanding solitude opportunities just about anywhere within the area. The WSA would be capable of sustaining relatively high use (much higher than now occurs) while still providing solitude for anyone who seeks it.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Opportunities for recreation were found to be good but less than outstanding during the wilderness inventory. Current recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, trapping, deer hunting, blue grouse hunting, and rockhounding are found throughout the WSA. About 18,000 acres of the area are crucial deer summer range, and wildlife sightings, especially deer and elk are common.

In addition, the White Rock Range is notable for its large number of springs which enhance opportunities for backpacking, camping, and hiking. The relatively large amount of riparian acreage supported by these springs provides habitat for numerous animal species. This diversity of flora and fauna provides good opportunities for nature study.

While these are not an extraordinary diversity of opportunities, nor is any one of them considered outstanding; they are nonetheless enjoyable, each for different reasons, and all because they exist in an unspoiled, natural setting far away from the influence of man.

D. Special Features: the original wilderness inventory did not list any special features. After completion of the inventory however, an elk herd of about 20 to 30 animals set up residence. The elk use the northern portion of the WSA and seeing these animal enhances the visitor's wilderness experience. They are now considered a special feature of the WSA.

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

White Rock Range WSA is in the Intermountain Sagebrush Province (Bailey-Kuchler) and Great Basin Sagebrush (3,984 acres) and Juniper-Pinyon Woodland (20,081 acres) are the predominant ecosystems. Additionally, scattered throughout the WSA are large stands of white fir and aspen (see Table 2).

B. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Days Driving Time (5 Hours) of Major Population Centers

Designation of the White Rock Range WSA as wilderness would expand the opportunities for solitude and recreation in a designated wilderness area for one major population center, Las Vegas, Nevada. The White Rock Range WSA lies about 3 hours north of Las Vegas, and is accessible from there by paved highways and dirt roads. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a 5-hour drive of the Las Vegas population center.

TABLE 2
ECOSYSTEM REPRESENTATION

BAILEY-KUCHLER CLASSIFICATION (PNV)	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
NATIONWIDE (INTERMOUNTAIN SAGEBRUSH PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	16	362,556	77	2,250,026
Great Basin Sagebrush	7	104,407	60	1,088,540
NEVADA (INTERMOUNTAIN SAGEBRUSH PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	10	268,900	45	1,645,628
Great Basin Sagebrush	7	104,407	38	847,326

Source: BLM File Data.

TABLE 3
WILDERNESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

POPULATION CENTERS	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
Las Vegas, Nevada	55	4,006,293	311	11,186,463

Source: BLM File Data.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The White Rock Range WSA would contribute to the geographic distribution of the areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System in Nevada.

Designation of this WSA would provide the public with wilderness opportunities in another portion of the state.

Manageability (The area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.)

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

The White Rock Range WSA is easily manageable as wilderness. The boundaries of the unit are easily found on the ground. There are no private inholdings in the area, no mineral leases or mining claims where development seems likely with designation, and no disturbing outside sights or sounds. Cherry-stemmed routes are very few, very short, and are well screened by tree cover.

Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines prepared a mineral assessment report for the White Rock Range WSA in 1986, (U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 1728-B).

The report indicates that the White Rock Range WSA has no identified mineral resources and has low mineral resource potential for metals. This assessment is based on extensive geochemical and rock chip samples taken throughout the unit as well as detailed study of known mineral occurrences in the region. The USGS/BOM assessment is supported by the fact that only one mining claim has been staked within the WSA in the past and no mining or exploration activity has occurred. Although the claim is located near the Stateline Mining District, no mineralized veins or outcrops were found within the WSA boundaries during the study.

The report states that potential for oil and gas, coal, and geothermal energy resources within the unit is low due to the lack of host rocks or structures favorable for their occurrence.

The 1983 GEM study differs from the recent evaluation of the USGS/BOM report. The GEM study rated the WSA as having moderate potential for mineral resources, with a low certainty factor.

The GEM rating was derived largely from extrapolation of known mineral occurrences to the south of the WSA as well as mineral occurrences contiguous with two other WSAs included in the study located to the west of the White Rock Range.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impacts table (Table 4) summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Designation of the White Rock Range WSA as wilderness would not accrue any significant adverse or beneficial impacts to existing income and employment in the area. Currently, livestock grazing and limited forest product harvesting are the only employing industries operating in the area that utilize lands within the WSA. Wilderness designation would not affect current grazing on the WSA. Commercial forest product harvesting would be disallowed in wilderness but many other equally productive sites exist in the vicinity to supply the demand.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

During the formal inventory phase, no comments were received on this unit which raised issues to be analyzed during the study phase.

There were a total of 35 comments received during the study process which mentioned the White Rock Range WSA. Of these, 22 supported the unit for wilderness designation citing the solitude in the dense forests, archaeological sites, spotted bats and lack of conflicts. The Nevada Division of State Parks supports the unit for wilderness. Thirteen comments were received opposing wilderness designation stating they were generally opposed to wilderness, the unit had some favorability for gold, that it contained roads, intrusions and private water rights. The Nevada Departments of Wildlife and Agriculture opposed wilderness designation.

During formal public review of the Draft EIS and Wilderness Technical Report held between April 8 to July 8, 1983, a total of 10 comments were received specifically addressing the White Rock Range WSA. Of those, six were written comments and four were oral testimonies. In general, six commenters supported wilderness designation for all or part of the WSA and three commenters supported no wilderness for the WSA and one commenter took no position on designation.

Comments stated the unit met the wilderness criteria and had unusually low resource conflicts. Specific comments opposing wilderness designation stated there were private lands and water holdings within the unit, current recreational access routes, and that options for wildlife habitat improvement should remain open.

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Mines, Bureau of Reclamation, Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Park Service, and the Department of the Air Force all commented on the Draft EIS. None of these agencies had a jurisdictional conflict with either of the alternatives. The Governor of Nevada as well as the State Divisions of State Lands, Parks, Forestry, and Historic Preservation and Archaeology supported a no wilderness recommendation for the White Rock Range WSA, stating the unit "lacks really positive and unique wilderness values." The Nevada Department of Wildlife opposes wilderness designation because of current recreational access routes and to keep management options open for range improvements. The Lincoln County Conservation District opposes wilderness designation stating it "has several old roads and has high potential for vegetation improvements" for wildlife and livestock.

One letter was received on the Final EIS from the Environmental Protection Agency which supported the BLM's wilderness recommendation.

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

TABLE 4
COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF THE IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE

Issue Topics	Proposed Action (All Wilderness)	No Wilderness
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The impact of designation of the White Rock Range WSA as wilderness would be to preserve the excellent opportunities for solitude, important scenic values, elk habitat, and the pristine character of the unit.	Long-term impacts on wilderness qualities would occur on approximately 1,950 acres mostly from vegetation removal. These disturbances would become more natural appearing with the passage of time. The remaining 22,100 acres not designated would retain their wilderness values.
Impacts on Exploration and Development of Mineral Resources	Exploration and development of mineral resources would be foregone on all unclaimed lands within the WSA. 5 acres of surface disturbing exploration would be eliminated due to the lack of valid and existing claims.	All lands within the WSA would remain open to mineral entry. There would be no impacts on the exploration or development of mineral resources. Favorability for the discovery of mineral resources is low in the WSA and development is not expected to take place, regardless of the wilderness decision.
Impacts on Exploration and Development of Energy Resources	All lands within the WSA would be withdrawn from mineral leasing, exploration and development.	All lands within the WSA would remain open to mineral leasing. There would be no impacts on the exploration for or development of energy resources. Favorability for discovery of mineral resources is considered low within the WSA and development of energy resources is not expected to take place, regardless of wilderness designation.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impacts on grazing facility maintenance. Costs would be slightly higher for new project construction and one 3-mile section of pipeline would not be allowed. The absence of the pipeline would have a negligible affect on grazing.	There would be no impacts on grazing facility maintenance and construction within the White Rock Range WSA.
Impacts on Woodland Product Harvest	The harvest of 7,440 cords of fuelwood, 1,760 Christmas trees every 6 years, and commercial pine nut sales would be foregone. This would be a minor impact since supplies outside the WSA could satisfy demand.	There would be no impacts on woodland product harvest.
Impacts on Recreational Off-Road Use	Recreational ORV use of fewer than 100 visitor days annually would be displaced. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.

WHITE ROCK RANGE WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

Impacts on Vegetation Manipulation

Prescribed burns and limited suppression of wildfires would be used to return the WSA to a more natural condition. Vegetation conversions using these methods would take somewhat longer to accomplish.

There would be no impacts on proposed vegetation conversions.